

REMARKS

The above amendments to the above-captioned application along with the following remarks are being submitted as a full and complete response to the Final Office Action dated January 12, 2005 (U.S. Patent Office Paper No. 20050105). In view of the above amendments and the following remarks, the Examiner is respectfully requested to give due reconsideration to this application, to indicate the allowability of the claims, and to pass this case to issue.

With the filing of the above identified application on February 10, 2004, a Claim for Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119 was requested and a certified copy of the corresponding priority document was filed. Acknowledgment of the Claim for Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119 and acknowledgement of receipt of the certified copy of the corresponding priority document are respectfully requested.

Status of the Claims

As outlined above, Claims 6, 8 through 11, 15 and 21 are pending in this application. Claims 1 and 7 have been cancelled without prejudice or disclaimer, with Claims 2 through 5, 12 through 14 and 16 through 20 being previously cancelled without prejudice or disclaimer, and Claims 6, 8, 10, 11 and 21 have been amended to correct formal errors and to more particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject invention, with Claim 8 being rewritten in independent form to substantially include the recitations of Claims 1 and 7.

Prior Art Rejections

Claim 1 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) over U.S. Patent No. 5,838,609 to Kuriyama, hereinafter referred to as the Kuriyama '609 patent.

Claims 1, 6 and 7 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(a) over U.S. Patent No. 6,707,751 to Iwahashi et al., hereinafter referred to as the Iwahashi '751 patent.

Claims 10, 11 and 21 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) over the Kuriyama '609 patent and the Iwahashi '751 patent.

In response to the above rejections of Claims 1, 6, 7, 10, 11 and 21 respectively under 35 U.S.C. § 102(a) and (b) and under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a), it is respectfully noted that the Final Office Action stated that Claims 8, 9, and 15 were objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including the recitations of the base claim and any intervening claims (U.S. Patent Office Paper No. 20050105, page 3).

Objected to Claim 8 has been rewritten in independent form substantially including the recitations of independent Claim 1 and dependent Claim 7, with Claims 1 and 7 being cancelled without prejudice or disclaimer. Therefore, it is respectfully submitted that Claim 8 is now in condition for allowance.

Also, dependent Claims 6, 10, 11 and 21 have been amended to depend from Claim 8, with dependent Claims 9 and 15 depending from Claim 8. Therefore, it is respectfully submitted that dependent Claims 6, 9, 10, 11, 15 and 21 are now in condition for allowance.

Therefore, in view of the foregoing, withdrawal of the above identified rejections of Claims 1, 6, 7, 10, 11 and 21 respectively under 35 U.S.C. § 102(a) and (b) and under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) is respectfully requested.

Reconsideration and allowance of Claims 6, 8 through 11, 15 and 21 are respectfully requested.

Conclusion

In view of all the above, Applicants respectfully submit that certain clear and distinct differences as discussed exist between the present invention as now claimed and the prior art references upon which the rejections in the Office Action rely. These differences are more than sufficient that the present invention as now claimed would not have been anticipated nor rendered obvious given the prior art. Rather, the present invention as a whole is distinguishable, and thereby allowable over the prior art.

Favorable reconsideration of this application as amended is respectfully solicited. Should there be any outstanding issues requiring discussion that would further the prosecution and allowance of the above-captioned application, the Examiner is invited to contact the Applicants' undersigned representative at the address and phone number indicated below.

Respectfully submitted,

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May 9, 2005